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NAVY MEDICINE IN FOCUS

## Hospital Corps' Top Doc

BY VJOHNSON – DECEMBER 4, 2014

POSTED IN: NEWS

31st Marine Expeditionary Unit  
Story by Lance Cpl. Tyler Ngiraswei

CAMP HANSEN, Japan – There were an estimated five thousand casualties suffered during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, and independent duty corpsmen did their best to prevent the deaths of those injured.

Petty Officer 1st Class Wilson Rodriguez, Jr., now an IDC himself, served as a hospital corpsman on a small base in Iraq and witnessed the effectiveness of an IDC.

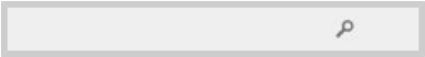
“Any casualty that came in, from the sniffles to a gunshot wound or blast injuries, the IDC was the first guy to receive a patient, divvy out teams and just call out the shots,” said Rodriguez, a surface force IDC with Combat Logistics Battalion 31, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. “My IDC was performing life-saving interventions, whether he was stopping bleeding or intubating people. I looked up to him.”

An independent duty corpsman is the pinnacle of the Navy Hospital Corps, according to Rodriguez, a native of Cleveland. They are the corpsmen who stand out, have a strong understanding in medicine and have the proper motivation to uphold the title of IDC.



Petty Officer 1st Class Wilson Rodriguez, Jr., a surface force independent duty corpsman, stands inside a shock trauma platoon aid station here Nov. 18. An independent duty corpsman is a hospital corpsman who has completed a yearlong course that increases their knowledge on emergency, clinical and acute medicine and administrative skills. The independent duty corpsman also mentors and teaches junior corpsmen. Rodriguez is a native of Cleveland and is assigned to Combat Logistics Battalion 31, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Tyler Ngiraswei/ Released)

Independent Duty Corpsman School at the Surface Warfare Medicine Institute located in San Diego is a year long,



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where the sailors learn many skills such as emergency, clinical and administrative medicine. The IDC learns to perform diagnostic procedures, advanced first aid, basic life support, nursing procedures, minor surgery, basic clinical laboratory procedures and routine emergency health care.

Rodriguez attended IDC school starting in July 2011 and graduated in July 2012; since then he has been setting the example for other corpsmen to follow.

“To be an independent duty corpsman, you must be strong-willed, self-motivated and quite simply a leader as a whole,” said Seaman Benjamin L. Wood, a hospitalman with Health Service Support Platoon, CLB-31. “They should be leaders and teachers, educating and showing their juniors to be better sailors and better people.”

Rodriguez is just one of the many IDCs who provide the backbone to the Hospital Corps, supporting sailors and Marines wherever they may serve.


“IDCs are everywhere: in Afghanistan, in submarines, on ships,” said Wood, from Wyanet, Illinois. “Anywhere there are Marines or sailors, an IDC will be present in place of the doctor.”

IDCs have fulfilled the roles of senior corpsmen, mentors, and teachers for their younger protégés and their lineage will continue with IDCs like Rodriguez.

“The impact we make on our junior sailors keeps them ready so they will be able to use the skills we constantly train in,” said Rodriguez. “At the drop of a dime our medical skills will kick in and we will be able to save someone’s life.”

The Marines and sailors of CLB-31 are permanently assigned to the 31st MEU as the logistics combat element and are conducting pre-deployment training in support of the regularly-scheduled spring patrol of the Asia-Pacific.

TAGS: BUMED, Corpsman, IDC, navy, Navy medicine, Rodriguez, U.S. Navy



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